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THE USE OF THE MUSEUM

DURING the past few years the use of the Museum's collections by teachers, scholars in public and private schools, and craftsmen has increased to a gratifying extent. This is indicated by the use made of the collections of lantern slides, photographs and books in the Library, and by the use of the study collections of laces and textiles, as well as by actual study and copying done in the galleries.

In the matter of lantern slides, chiefly representing objects in our own collections, 6,638 were used between September, 1911, and the same month in the present year, by lecturers in the Museum class-room, by Dr. Haney in his lectures before the teachers in the public schools, by public school teachers, by private school teachers, and by lecturers in other places, from Vermont to Michigan.

Many prominent firms of decorators and manufacturers of tapestries, jewelry, silverware, furniture, metalwork, lace, and textiles, not only New York houses but several out-of-town firms have sent their designers to the Museum to copy the designs to be found here, and have purchased large numbers of photographs for use in studios and factories. Colleges, universities, schools, and teachers of decoration all over the country have availed themselves of the opportunity to add our photographs to their collections, and many publishers and authors of books on cabinet-work, furniture, textiles, gems, iron-work, lace, etc., have applied to us for material illustrative of these subjects. We count it especially significant of the recognition of the Museum's desire to make its collections practically useful to those whose work lies in the making of designs for objects of the decorative arts that so many individual designers have looked to us for help. The number of these individual workers in textiles, woodwork, pottery, and metals has been increased greatly since the opening of the collections of the decorative arts given by Mr. Morgan and arranged with earlier accessions in the Wing of Decorative Arts in 1910.

EDUCATIONAL WORK IN THE MUSEUM: A REVIEW

THE keynote of the present era in the history of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, as in that of museums generally, has been educational efficiency. "It has become well recognized in recent years," as someone has said, "that the undertaking of a museum does not cease with the collection and exhibition of works of art. It has to make them intelligible and attractive to the public."

In confining this statement to the recent history of this Museum, we must not overlook the evident aim and real accomplishment of the Museum authorities in earlier years. The Trustees had been at the outset predisposed by their own conception of a museum of art, as well as pledged by their charter, to make the most of the opportunity offered them of becoming an educational force in the city. From the first they furnished free tickets of admission to the students of Cooper Union, the Art Students' League, and the Brooklyn Art Association, and other students of art. Recognition of the value of educational work is also evident in the following paragraph from the Annual Report submitted in May, 1875: "The Museum has had its effect for good. Several schools have introduced the history and principles of the fine arts into their courses of education. Teachers, accompanied by scholars, frequently visit the Museum to examine illustrations of the immediate subjects of their study, and large numbers of young persons are among the most frequent visitors and the most careful students of works of art."

No review of the educational work of the Museum would be complete without a brief statement concerning the Art Schools of the Museum, for from 1880 to 1894 the Museum conducted schools of its own. It is true that these suffered many vicissitudes, being carried on under several different managements in a number of different places, finally occupying rooms in the basement of the Museum itself; it is equally true that they exerted a

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considerable influence during more than a decade. The advanced pupils often procured remunerative positions as practical designers. A normal class was started for teachers of drawing in the public schools, and to this superintendents of schools in the vicinity of New York sent their teachers also.

Gradually, however, the schools ceased to have a vital relation to the Museum itself; but slight use was made of the collections; the greater part of the income was exhausted by large elementary classes in drawing and painting, for teaching which the Museum had no greater advantages than many a school in the city. Whereas at first the schools had emphasized industrial art education and sought to reach the artist-artisan class, the studies now taught were those included in the curriculum of the typical art school. In consequence of these changes in the character of the schools came their discontinuance. Although the Trustees "approved the organization in the schools of the Museum of special classes for the study of special kinds of objects, and of the employment from time to time of experts in the different matters illustrated in these collections to give public lectures upon them," they recognized that it was "their main office in the matter of education to make the Museum itself intelligible and instructive."

Looking toward a more definite realization of this educational aim as it applies to an important part of the population of New York, the children in the public schools, the Executive Committee adopted in January, 1905, a resolution that put in words the sympathetic attitude of this Museum towards the public school teachers and scholars. It reads:

"Whereas: The Trustees of The Metropolitan Museum of Art desire to extend the educational opportunities of the Museum so far as practicable to the teachers and scholars of the public schools of the City,

"Resolved: That the Board of Education be notified of the willingness of the Trustees to issue on application to any teacher in the public schools, under such

regulations as the Board of Education may prescribe, a ticket entitling such teacher to free admittance to the Museum at all times when the Museum is open to the public, including pay days, either alone or accompanied by not more than six public school scholars for whose conduct such teacher will be willing to become responsible."

By this resolution the door to the Museum was thrown open to the teachers of the public schools; they had but to come and avail themselves of the hospitality of the Museum. The Board of Education through its President, Hon. Henry N. Tift, sent notification of this action to all teachers in the public schools, with the result that 1,093 applications for teachers' tickets were received during 1905.

Two years later another forward step was taken when the place of Supervisor of Museum Instruction was created, and the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Henry W. Kent, was appointed to perform the duties of this new position. The object in view was active coöperation with the teachers, the furnishing of practical help in making the Museum an important ally in the teaching of art, history, and literature as taken up in the curriculum of the public schools. The Annual Report of 1907 announced, "Special written information will be given at any time to teachers who will designate in advance the work which they wish to illustrate. A class room with seating capacity of about one hundred and fifty to two hundred and containing apparatus for stereopticon exhibition, has been set aside for the use of teachers with pupils and may be secured at any time during Museum hours, notice being given in advance in order to prevent conflicting visits. When the visits of teachers or pupils fall on pay days, provision is made for their admission without charge. Photographs and lantern slides from the collections of the Museum are sent to the class room when desired, and assistance in selecting those which will be of use in the ground to be covered by the teacher's lecture is gladly given. Direct intercourse between the Museum and the teachers is had from time to time, and lectures on special

subjects are being given by members of the Museum staff. . . .

"The Museum holds itself ready at all times to confer with teachers and to assist as far as it may in their work, and it is hoped that in the future they will find it possible to take more advantage of the benefits which the institution can give than the demands of the school system have seemed to permit in the past."

In other words, by the appointment of a Supervisor of Museum Instruction and the equipping of a class-room for the use of teachers, the Museum had not merely extended a cordial invitation to teachers, but had made definite preparation for accommodating its guests. The teachers and scholars came in increasing numbers. In 1907 the number of teachers with classes attending the Museum was 2,224; in 1908, the number rose to 5,627.

Still further material to render the Museum useful to teachers and scholars has now been prepared. Since 1907 the Museum has been acquiring by gift or purchase a collection of lantern slides numbering 10,763, which is kept at the Information Desk. These are not confined to objects in the Museum, but have been chosen to illustrate the various subjects represented in the Museum collections. They are used for lectures both in the Museum and elsewhere; in fact, they have frequently been sent a hundred miles or more from New York City and one set was used at the Dresden Art Congress of August, 1912. From September, 1911, to September, 1912, 199 lectures were thus illustrated. For use in free lectures, there is no fee; for private purposes, a charge of one cent per slide is made with a minimum charge of fifty cents. This enables any teacher of art to illustrate his lectures without cost or with a nominal payment, according to the circumstances.

The third step was taken by the Museum in 1908 in the appointment of a Museum Instructor, whose whole time should be occupied with guiding classes and individuals to the objects they wished to see in connection with school work or for personal pleasure. This was tried on the general principle that a person is a more

inspiring guide than a book or a label. Not only had the Museum prepared a room; it had also secured a hostess to greet and entertain its guests. To quote again, "The pleasantest form of introduction to objects of art is undoubtedly the companionship of someone who knows them and who leads us to them and instils into us by words and behavior his familiarity and love for them. Visits to museums with such people are engraved on our memories and affect our whole future experience. Encouragement by the explanation of a simple point, the answering, maybe, of a trivial question, the direction of a tendency, the correction of an error, the interpretation of a meaning, a convention, a technical process, the unveiling of some evasive but significant beauty, the mere charm of intercourse with a well-informed man who has feeling, may fill moments of enthrallment." By the appointment of a Museum Instructor, the opportunity of seeing the Museum collections under expert guidance is open to everyone. Members, teachers, and pupils of the public schools receive this assistance free; all others pay a nominal charge of twenty-five cents per person, with a minimum of one dollar per hour. Over four thousand persons during 1911 were thus aided to appreciate the collections, of whom thirty-seven hundred were teachers and classes. This result is more encouraging because it is an evidence of real, spontaneous interest, since the Board of Education does not require art museum visiting as a part of the school curriculum, as is the case in the science museums.

The most recent development of the situation has been the appointment by the Superintendent of Education of Dr. James P. Haney, Supervisor of Art in the High Schools, "to investigate the feasibility of coöperation with the Museum, following the lines of the Museum's approval in this matter during the last few years, and then to recommend an experiment to show the utility and effect of such coöperation." That is, the school authorities have now taken official action looking toward the possibility of closer coöperation with the Museum in the future.

With the opening of the Lecture Room in the fall of 1911 an opportunity was given for a course of lectures specially designed to help the High School teachers to use the Museum collections with and for their pupils intelligently and successfully. Such a course was conducted during the spring of 1912 as follows:

suggestions of these lectures may be found useful and practicable by those who heard them.

The goal toward which the Museum has been working in all these progressive steps, and toward which it will continue to work, is to secure a recognized place in the curriculum of the schools for visits to the



Museums and Teachers of History, by President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University; Museums and Teachers of Art, by Kenyon Cox; Museums and Teachers of English, by Professor Stockton Axson, of Princeton University, and Museums and Teachers of the Classics, by Professor Oliver S. Tonks, of Vassar College. It is hoped that during the coming winter the

Museum, that they may be planned for regularly in the assignment of time with the other studies. Then only will the work be on a permanent basis, no longer dependent on the enthusiasm of the teacher or the interest of the supervisor, but continuing by right and necessity, not by favor or option.

W. E. H.